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PREVENTION OF FIRES IN SCHOOLS.

A recent issue of *Conservation* draws attention to the necessity for giving school children practice in fire drills from the day of their entering school. There is all the more reason for this because new pupils will be unused to their surroundings, and subject to confusion in case of an alarm of fire. The article goes on to give the following instructions for precautions against fires:

The principal and teachers should also familiarize themselves with the school building, noting any dangerous conditions for immediate attention.

Accumulations of papers, disused furniture and school supplies are stored in basements and

attics, and accentuated by deposits of dust, create serious fire-danger from spontaneous combustion. Chimneys or pipes passing through attics should be carefully inspected for any cracks or defects from which sparks could be emitted.

The care of waste paper is important. Metal waste paper baskets should be used and the contents burned as soon as the baskets are full; under no circumstances should they be allowed to accumulate. The burning should be done in a safe place, away from frame out-buildings or fences, and should be carried out by either the teacher personally or by some reliable senior pupil.

The heating apparatus, be it stove or furnace, should be carefully examined and placed in fire-safe condition.

Ashes should be kept in metal containers and should never be deposited near frame buildings or wooden fences. Wood should not be placed close to the stove or furnace to dry. This is a very dangerous practice, and has caused many fires.

All doors leading from class-rooms, corridors and school buildings should open outward and should never be locked during school hours.

In the larger schools where a janitor is employed it should be a part of his duty to make a daily inspection of the school premises, from basement to attic. This should be imperative and not simply a matter of convenience.

The position of janitor or caretaker of a school is an important one. The custody of valuable property and the protection of many lives are in his keeping. Too often the only qualification for this position is the low salary at which a man may be secured. The position should be made one of ample salary and a reliable and qualified occupant employed; strict attention to duty should then be insisted upon.

There has been a material reduction in the number of school fires during the past few years. In 1913 there were 35 school fire losses, in 1914 there were 26, while in 1915 there were only 11. It is hoped that 1916 will show that, owing to the greater care exercised by those responsible, school fires have been entirely eliminated.